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WHOLE NO. 514

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HORACE, CARMINA 1.2.13-16

In Horace, Carmina 1.2.13-16 we read as follows:

Vidimus flavum Tiberim retortis
litore Etrusco violenter undis
ire deiectum monumenta regis
templaque Vestae . . .

As every reader will recall, these verses are part of Horace's statement of certain portents sent by the gods—especially Jupiter himself—and their effect upon Rome, the city and its people.

There has been much discussion of the meaning of these verses.

Part of this discussion is represented very well in the following extract from the notes of Mr. T. E. Page on verses 13-14:

Most editors take this, 'we have seen the yellow Tiber, its waves hurled violently back from the shore of the Tuscan sea, advance to destroy . . .,' explaining it by reference to an old theory (mentioned by Herodotus, 2.20, but rejected by him, and by Seneca Nat. Quaest. 3.26) to the effect that floods are due to the wind blowing violently against the mouth of a river and preventing the efflux of its waters. This is objectionable, first, because it is hard to conceive that so absurd a theory was widely prevalent; secondly, because even assuming this theory and assuming *litus Etruscum* to mean the shore of the Tuscan sea, it is absolutely impossible to conceive how the waves of the Tiber could be said to be hurled back from it. How can a river be driven back, not by the sea, or the wind, but by the sea-coast?

In discussing the foregoing passage, I begin with the very last words, "by the sea-coast". This is most extraordinarily unfair. I do not really believe that anybody else has ever explained *litore* in this passage as an instrumental ablative. At any rate, it would be far more natural to interpret *litore* as meaning 'from the sea-coast'. Mr. Page himself, in two consecutive sentences, uses the expressions "hurled back from it", and "driven back . . . by the sea-coast". I regret to feel obliged to say that Mr. Page very frequently misrepresented, consciously or unconsciously, scholars whose views he was combating. In his edition of the Odes of Horace, he was often unfair to Mr. Wickham; in his edition of all the major works of Vergil, he was even more frequently unfair to Conington. In simple matters, he often misstates the views—clearly expressed and wholly intelligible—of these excellent scholars. By this process he is constantly setting up a man of straw that he joyously tears to tatters.

I comment next on Mr. Page's statement that the explanation advanced by Seneca, Quaestiones Naturales 3.26, to the effect that "floods are due to the wind blowing violently against the mouth of a river and preventing the efflux of its waters" is absurd, so absurd that it is hard to believe that it was ever prevalent as a theory.

In the fifth version of Orelli's edition of Horace's Odes, prepared by W. Hirschfeld (Berlin, Calvary, 1886), in the note on verse 13 of our passage, I find these words:

Opinio haec <i.e. Seneca's> erat estque etiamnunc popelli Romani, Tiberis eluviones ex eo oriri, quod marinorum fluctuum vi a litore maris Etrusci sive ab ostio eius aquae repellantur.

Of this comment Mr. Page makes no mention, though elsewhere he is aware of Orelli's existence.

Now on the night of February 20, 1893, there was a very low tide in the East River, the river which separates Manhattan Island, the island on which New York City proper lies, and Long Island, on which Brooklyn lies. A newspaper then in existence, but long since defunct, The New York Press, on the following day declared that the low water was due to the high winds which blew down the stream, seaward, and kept the water out at sea. I am not in position to quote verbatim the report in The New York Press. What precedes I give on the basis of a memorandum made by me at the time, on the margin of my copy of Mr. Page's edition of the Odes of Horace. There are reasons, into which I need not enter, that make me absolutely certain as to the fact that there was, on the date specified, an extraordinarily low tide in the East River. I am not maintaining that a newspaper reporter, or even a newspaper editor, was necessarily a competent authority on matters scientific. But at any rate, the fact that the item to which I refer did appear in The New York Press, on February 21, 1893, is evidence enough that the theory which seemed so absurd to Mr. Page did not seem absurd, late in the nineteenth century, to a reporter or to an editor of a great New York City daily newspaper.

Unfortunately, I am not able to give the exact date of the incident to which I refer next. But some time after 1893, the Transatlantic liner St. Paul, during pre-War days one of the American Line of steamers to Europe, got somewhat off its course in New York Harbor, and went aground at a point where normally the vessel should not have gone aground, indeed could not have gone aground, because it could not have reached it. This statement is based in part on memoranda made at the time, but mainly upon my memory (I have every reason to believe that my memory is accurate here). Wrecking derricks and tugs—the most powerful obtainable—were immediately summoned to pull the St. Paul off, but they tugged and tugged in vain for several days in a row, I believe. Finally, as I recall it, an old seaman, an expert in the ways of wind and wave in New York harbor, called attention to the fact that the wind had been blowing from a certain direction on the occasion—I

think it was in the night time—when the St. Paul went aground. He made the suggestion that the wind had piled up the waters on the spot where she met her mishap deeper than they ordinarily were in that quarter of the harbor; he added that, in his judgment, it would not be possible to get the vessel off until the conditions of the mishap should be duplicated. Fortunately, within a short time the conditions were duplicated exactly. The wind blew from the same quarter, and the waters were piled up as they had been on the fateful night. The wrecking tugs set to work at once, and pulled the vessel off with little difficulty.

Recently, I sought and found refreshment by reading a book entitled *The Argentine Republic, Its Development and Progress*, by Pierre Denis, translated by Joseph McCabe (London, Unwin, 1922. Pp. 296). Chapter VIII (234-259) deals with *The River-Routes*. Most of the chapter is devoted, inevitably, to a description of the great river of the Argentine Republic, the Paraná. On pages 251-254 the author deals with the estuary of this river. The following words (252-253) are pertinent to our discussion of the passage in Horace:

The tide in the estuary is very irregular. The south-east winds increase the flow <=flood> and retard the ebb. When they are blowing, it often happens that the level of the water in the upper estuary keeps up from one tide to the next, sometimes for several days....

Here we have a modern scholar, manifestly well versed in matters geological and geographical, repeating, in effect, the views of the New York reporter of thirty years before, and of Seneca, nineteen hundred years ago. Was Seneca so absurd, after all?

Now, personally, I am very much inclined to believe that Mr. Page's explanation of the meaning of our passage in Horace is correct. He interprets *litore Etrusco* of the Etruscan, or Janiculan bank (*ripa*) of the Tiber, at Rome itself, and thinks of the

'... waves <of the Tiber in flood> hurled back with violence from the (steep) banks on the Etrurian side (against which the whole force of the stream would come), and advance (as they naturally would, checked by the river-bend and the island) to destroy.... Any citizen of London might see the same effect produced by the Thames being driven back from the lofty embankment of the Middlesex shore to flood the humbler dwellings on the Sussex side.

That his view was in no sense original with him Mr. Page gives not a hint.

But I am not concerned just now with the correct interpretation of Horace's words. What I am concerned with is this, that it is becoming increasingly dangerous for modern scholars to charge the ancients with stupidity. Herodotus long ago began to come into his own. Seneca was not altogether a fool. His vagaries, and those of others of the ancients, Greek and Roman, can be matched by a long list of erroneous statements made by scholars in the intervening years, even by scholars of very recent times, fortified by all sorts of external aids in their search for the truth, aids of which Seneca never dreamed.

CHARLES KNAPP

SOME PRESUPPOSITIONS OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY¹

The presuppositions to which I am referring in this paper are those ideas which were only sometimes conscious in Greek philosophers. Many times they directed philosophic reflection subconsciously, as it would be fashionable to say to-day. The ideas I have in mind probably seemed self-evident to the men who entertained them, much as the axioms of Euclid seemed self-evident in happier days. They reveal themselves sometimes in the overt expressions of such men as Aristotle, sometimes as concealed premises. Not all the Greek philosophers accepted all of them. Further, because of the fragmentary state of early Greek philosophical literature we can not tell how far the acceptance of others extended. The ideas are interesting not only because they throw some light on the reasoning of the Greeks, and hence clarify certain arguments which would otherwise be obscure, but also because they established in Europe certain traditions which linger on even to this day.

The first of these presuppositions concerns similar and dissimilar things. A whole group of Greek psychologists believed that only similars could stand in the cognitive relation and a whole group believed that only similars could stand in the causal relation. There were, of course, as Theophrastus pointed out (*De Sensu* 1.1), other philosophers who maintained that only dissimilars could know one another. In medicine Hippocrates believed that dissimilar things could be causally related. But the belief in dissimilars did not prevail, not because its supporters were any less accurate than its opponents, but because they were less influential.

In the 'likeness school' of psychologists Theophrastus lists Parmenides, Empedocles, and Plato. Parmenides, for instance, even maintained that corpses perceived the corpse-like qualities of cold and silence, if not light, warmth, and sound (*Theophrastus, De Sensu* 1.4). In Empedocles we find this fragment (B.221)², "For it is with earth that we see Earth and Water with water; by air we see bright Air, by fire destroying Fire. By love do we see Love and Hate by grievous hate" (*Theophrastus, De Sensu* 1.7). "In a like strain", says Theophrastus (*De Sensu* 1.10), "he <Empedocles> speaks also of understanding and of ignorance. The one is due to what is like; the other to what is unlike; since in his view thought is either identical with sense perception or very similar to it". To account for the fact that our thoughts range over everything, Empedocles concluded that we think chiefly with the blood, for in the blood all the elements are commingled.

The influence of Plato's Timaeus undoubtedly had a good bit to do with the survival of this doctrine. In that dialogue (45 B: I use Jowett's translation), Plato seemed to explain vision as the effect of light upon light.

¹This paper was read at a meeting of the Baltimore Classical Club, in May, 1925.

²I use the translations by J. Burnet, when they are available. See his *Early Greek Philosophy* (London, A. and C. Black, 1920). This work is referred to, throughout, as B.

Of the organs <the gods> first contrived the eyes to give light . . . ; they contrived that as much of fire as would not have the power of burning, but would give only a gentle light, the light of every day life, should be formed into a body; and the pure fire which is within us and which is akin to this they made to flow through the eyes in a single, entire, and smooth substance, at the same time compressing the centre of the eye so as to retain all the denser element, and only to allow this to be sifted through pure. When therefore the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon like and there is a unison, and one body is formed by natural affinity according to the direction of the eyes, wherever the light from within meets that which comes from an external object. And everything being affected by likeness, whatever touches and is touched by this stream of vision, their motions are diffused over the whole body, and reach the soul, producing that perception which we call sight. But when the external and kindred fire passes away in a night, then the stream of vision is cut off; for going forth to the unlike element it is changed and extinguished, being no longer of one nature with the surrounding atmosphere which is now deprived of fire: and the eye no longer sees, and we go to sleep.

Plato uses the same idea more figuratively in the Republic (6,508) when he makes Socrates say,

And the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight of becoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence?

The real force of this theory comes out in Plotinus, for he took it with peculiar earnestness. He ends his chapter on beauty with the remark that a man should attempt to make his eye similar to the object that he is trying to see; the eye, he says, harking back to Plato, would never have been able to see the sun if it had not taken on sun-like qualities; similarly the soul would be unable to see the beautiful if it did not first become beautiful itself. 'Become then', he says (Enneades 1.6.9), 'godlike and beautiful if you wish to look upon God and the beautiful'. In a similar fashion he asks (Enneades 1.8.1) by what organ we can know evil, since none of our organs is evil. When it is, then, a question of knowing God, and it is for Plotinus always a question of knowing God, it becomes also a question of becoming like God. A complete similarity was required; when it was attained, identity with God was attained. Hence the discursive reason would not do as an instrument of that kind of cognition, for that analyzes and God is without parts. The only possibility is an intuition, an intuition in which subject and object become one (Enneades 5.3.17). Since like always unites itself with like, the soul in this intuition throws itself into God, forgetting its individual characteristics, and becomes God (Enneades 6.7.34)¹.

The application which Plotinus made of this theory is not unlike that which Bergson makes in our own day. Reality for Bergson is, as everyone knows, in his own words "a perpetual growth, a creation pursued without end" (Creative Evolution, translated by Mitchell, 239). Consequently the intellect can never know it. Why not? Because the intellect, "which is only a motionless

and fragmentary view of life", "naturally takes its stand outside of time" (51). It is spatial, not temporal, analytic, not synthetic, static, not dynamic. How then could it know the temporal, the unanalyzable, the dynamic? To Bergson, as to his followers, there is only one answer to this question, a negative. And the negative answer is inspired by little more than the Empedoclean formula, so much so that, when Bergson comes to distribute the proper objects to the cognitive faculties, he gives matter to the intellect. Intellect, he says in his Introduction to Creative Evolution (xi), need not be abandoned. "In so far as it relates to a certain aspect of inert matter, <it> ought, on the contrary, to give us a faithful imprint of it, having been stereotyped on this particular object". When he comes to find a cognitive faculty for life, he turns to intuition or instinct. In Creative Evolution, 176, he says,

Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations—just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us into matter. For—we cannot too often repeat it—intelligence and instinct are turned in opposite directions, the former towards inert matter, the latter towards life It is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us—by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.

In his short essay translated as An Introduction to Metaphysics, the point becomes clearer. "By intuition", he says there (7), "is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible". Though our present purpose is not to criticise but to expound, we may here ask, Is there any reason why a static faculty should not know a dynamic object other than the pre-supposition that our ideas must copy somehow or other their objects?

In some cases of ancient philosophy, duplicated as we shall see in modern thought, the argument seems to run, If our ideas are like their objects, then of course our objects are like their ideas. Hence we can reconstruct the universe from the ideas we entertain about it. This tendency manifests itself first, if I am not mistaken, in the Eleatics, although Xenophanes—who is sometimes said to have been their original teacher—had previously warned men against interpreting the universe in human terms. The Eleatics were almost fanatical projectors of human traits into the cosmos. When Zeno argued that Achilles could not overtake the tortoise, in spite of experience, or that an arrow could not move through the air, even though it did, he was in effect saying that, because these events could not happen in a rational universe, they could not happen in an observable universe. The suspicion that there were limits to the dominion of reason, that reason had to find its premises somewhere, that, if its conclusions were in manifest contradiction with tested observation, something was the matter with it and not with the world, seems to have escaped him and his school².

¹Aristotle seems to have noticed the reverse of this tendency among his compatriots. See his De Anima 405 b, 11, where he tells us that, because of the 'likeness theory', Greek psychologists made the soul consist of whatever the world consisted of in their philosophies. "Thus those thinkers who admit only one cause and one

²Compare Porphyry, 'Means of Attaining the Intelligibles' (ed. Didot), Chapters 10, 16. In the latter passage the 'likeness theory' is explained.

In the Middle Ages the most famous example of that kind was St. Anselm's ontological proof of the existence of God.⁵ Here was a distinct attempt to argue from the character of an idea to the character of its object. Similarly, Descartes⁶, in his statement of the proof of the existence of God, notes that there is such an inadequacy between his idea of God, "a substance infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself, and every other thing that exists, if any such there be, were created" and himself that he concludes that God must exist. For he himself is of course neither infinite, nor independent, nor all-knowing, nor all-powerful⁷. The opposite of this reasoning is also found. Our idea of the self, says Hume, for instance, is that of a continuous, identical, and simple being. But, since there must be an impression corresponding to every true idea, we must look for an impression which is continuous, identical, and simple. Compare his *Treatise of Human Nature*, Liv.6:

If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot therefore be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is deriv'd; and consequently there is no such idea.

That was clear enough for the most myopic reader.

The theory that like knows like is linked with the presupposition that like causes or attracts like. This latter notion was utilized by the French biologist, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire⁸, to explain the whole universe. For knowledge to most of the Greeks, that is to all except the Platonists and the Aristotelians, was produced in the human being by something external. A sensation was a *réceptif*. It was against this notion that Plotinus protested in his book on Sense and Memory (*Enneades* 4.6.1), and started a tradition which ran through Neo-Platonism into Kant, through the Neo-Kantians into Pragmatism. Both the Epicureans, following Democritus, and the Stoics agreed to the mind's receptivity in knowing⁹. There was literally a causal relation between that which was known and the knowledge of it, and—though we have no way of proving this indubitably—the 'likeness theory' in psychology may have been inferred from the 'likeness theory' about causation.

In Empedocles the postulate of the similarity between cause and effect is clearly made. Earlier philosophers show it only in application. Thus we can say that Heraclitus reasoned as if he believed it, but there

element, as fire or air, assume the soul also to be one element; while those who admit a plurality of principles assume plurality also in the soul . . ." (translated by Hicks, Cambridge University Press, 1907). He comes near to the same thing in the *De Sensu* (438 b, 17), where he suggests a correlation between the senses and the elements—sight with water, hearing with air, smell with fire. "Odor is a smoke-like fume and smoke-like fumes originate from fire; hence the organ of smell is appropriately located in the regions round the brain, as the substrate of that which is cold is potentially hot". Similar reasoning was applied to sight, touch, and taste. I use Ross's translation (Cambridge, 1906).

⁵Meditations III: = page 104 in the edition in Everyman's Library.

⁶Compare Vacherot's argument for the non-existence of God, *La Métaphysique et la Science*, 3.224 (Paris, 1863).

⁷Notions Synthétiques (Paris, 1838).

⁸Compare Plato, *Theaetetus* 191 D.

is sometimes a variety of premises for one conclusion and we cannot be sure that that is not so in this case. If he did believe it, we can see why, if he believed that Fire was the *ἀρχή*, he should have concluded that the world was ever coming into being and passing away, or why, if he believed that the world was in a state of flux, he should have chosen Fire as the *ἀρχή*. His system shows a strict similarity between the characteristics of the cause and base of the cosmos and the cosmos itself⁹.

But, as we were saying, in Empedocles the postulate is more easily discerned. If Love and Strife are material things, like the four elements, as Mr. Burnet believes they were for Empedocles, the postulate is at the very basis of the system. For Love is essentially the union of human beings and Strife their disunion, and in the cosmos their effects are union and disunion. Similarly we find Empedocles (B., Fragment 90, page 218) speaking of the attraction of similars: "So sweet lays hold of sweet, and bitter rushes to bitter; acid comes to acid, and warm couples with warm". Death is the "separation by Strife of the fire and earth in the body, each of which had all long been striving to 'reach its own kind'" (B.244-245). Sleep "was a temporary separation to a certain extent of the fiery element" (B.245). The same principle explained the growth of plants and the nutrition and growth of animals.

In Anaxagoras a similar idea may lie behind his theory that all the qualities found in the world to-day existed in the primordial mixture "of the moist and the dry, and the warm and the cold, and the light and the dark, and of much earth that was in it, and of a multitude of innumerable seeds in no way like each other" (B.258, Fragment 4). For we find him saying elsewhere, "How can hair come from what is not hair, or flesh from what is not flesh?" (B.259). So Diogenes of Apollonia maintained that everything must have come from one thing, since, if the elements, for instance, were really fundamentally different, ". . . then things could not in any way mix with one another, nor could they do one another good or harm" (B.354)¹⁰.

The four elements of Empedocles found their analogues—to the disgust of Hippocrates (Ancient Medicine, Chapter 20)—in the four medical principles, the hot (fire), the cold (air), the moist (water), the dry (earth) (B.201). These principles were most influential in the Humoralist school of physicians, according to whom disease and health depended upon the balance of the four humors. The humors were the blood (hot and moist), the phlegm (cold and moist), the yellow bile (hot and dry), the black bile (cold and dry). So mechanistic was this school of physicians that a predominance of one of these humors in an individual was believed by them to have an effect upon his character. A predominance of blood would produce the sanguine temperament, of phlegm the phlegmatic. This idea was utilized by Plato both in the *Philebus* and in the

⁹If the passage from Sextus Empiricus quoted and translated by Burnet (152) is an accurate version of Heraclitean beliefs on sleeping and waking, then Heraclitus did believe in the causal postulate.

¹⁰Seneca, years later, discussing the first cause, said, Epp. 65.12. Sed nos nunc primam et generalem quaerimus causam. Haec simplex esse debet. Nam et materia simplex est.

Timaeus. In his theory of disease in the *Timaeus*, for instance, we see it plainly. Compare 86 A:

When the constitution is disordered by excess of fire, then the heat and fever are constant; when air is the cause, then the fever is quotidian; when water, which is a more sluggish element than either fire or air, then the fever intermits a day; when earth is the cause, which is the most sluggish of the four, and is only purged away in a fourfold period, the result is a quartan fever, which can only with difficulty be taken off.

Hippocrates himself, who is usually so free of a priori conceptions, in his *Nature of Man* (Chapter 7), tries to prove that there are certain seasons of the year in which certain humors predominate—phlegm, the coldest, in winter; blood, warm and moist, in spring; yellow bile, hot and dry, in summer; black bile, cold and dry, in winter¹.

The philosophic justification of this theory of causation is to be found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1034 a 23). There Aristotle seems to assert that causation is the transmission of certain qualities from one object to another, that, when a human body is warmed by being rubbed, it simply receives heat from the hand which rubs it, heat which is previously present in the hand.

Unfortunately we cannot in this paper linger over the details of these points, but most content ourselves with merely noting them. The history of our causal postulate runs along smoothly until the seventeenth century, when we suddenly see its great importance for modern philosophy. When Descartes began to speculate on the nature of the body-mind relation, he discovered that each could be defined in its own terms and had no need of the other in order to be understood; that, as soon as one thought of extension, one defined 'body', and as soon as one thought of thinking, one defined 'mind'. This meant to him that they were separate 'substances', for substances were throughout Seventeenth Century Rationalism, as before in Scholastic Rationalism, discovered by logical rather than by empirical explorations. But, if they were separate substances, how could they interact? Descartes believed that they did interact, but he admitted his inability to justify his belief. His successors, the Occasionalists, were delighted to find this mystery at the heart of matters of fact and went to the extent of invoking the intervention of God at each effective volition of the human mind. Why was it a mystery? Why should not different substances interact? Spinoza said, Because the new effects would have come from nothing. But was there any question of the creation of new effects? The Seventeenth Century Rationalists apparently thought that there was.

There were, as is customary, two horns to the dilemma: retain the causal postulate and deny the apparent fact—in the well-established Eleatic manner; accept the fact and deny the postulate. We are still hopping like sparrows from one to the other of these perches.

Spinoza, as we know, chose to retain the postulate. The third proposition of his *Ethics* (Book I) is, 'Things

¹It might be well to compare what Zeller says about the Stoic theory of the cause of bodily action. See his *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*, English translation¹, 130-131, A, 7 (London, Longmans, 1870).

which have nothing in common cannot one be the cause of the other'. It follows ultimately from this that, 'Body cannot determine mind to think, neither can mind determine body to motion or rest or any state different from these, if such there be' (*Ethics* 3, Proposition 2), and the doctrine known as psychophysical parallelism began. Even to-day a psychologist like Professor Titchener says, 'We are told that mind influences body, and body mind. How an immaterial thing can influence and be influenced by a material thing we are not told,—for the very good reason that nobody knows'. But he is shrewd enough to add, 'Though, if this were the only view that did justice to the facts, we should nevertheless be bound to accept it' (*Text Book of Psychology*, 12 [New York, 1913]). There may be good reasons why the interaction of mind and body is purely illusory, but its inconceivability is simply a product of the old Greek causal postulate.

The third presupposition concerns the Aristotelian categories of action (*ποιεῖν*) and passion (*παθεῖν*). It is needless to explain to this audience that by 'passion' is meant simply something done to a person or to a thing. A *παθος* is simply an attribute, a modification, something received from without. Two very important propositions are connected with these categories, (1) that an inanimate thing is incapable of action, (2) that, as Aristotle said, *De Anima* 430 a 18, to act is 'nobler' than to be acted upon.

The distinction between animate and inanimate things based upon 'autokinesis' seems to survive even in Newton when he becomes metaphysical rather than mathematical. When a sharp distinction is made between the material and the immaterial, the latter becomes the source of motion irrespective of the causal postulate mentioned above. The effect of this presupposition is to make the *ψυχὴ* the mover of the body, and I imagine, though I cannot prove my point, that pre-Platonic philosophers constructed the soul out of as 'active' or mobile elements as they could find in order to explain plausibly its kinetic power. In Aristotle the soul is immaterial and acts without being acted upon, on the analogy of a purpose which demands fulfilment, or, more crudely, of a magnet. Some of his predecessors, he says (*De Anima* 406 a 22), maintained that it too could be moved; this he vigorously denies. He denies it largely on the ground that, if it were moved, it would be material and we know that it is immaterial. This was certainly influential in establishing the tradition of proving God's existence by the need of an immaterial source of physical motion.

The theory that material things were never active seemed to imply that immaterial things were never passive. The implication is at best a flight of fancy, perhaps inspired by the desire to keep symmetry within the universe. For, as on the one hand the Greek had matter and passivity, so on the other he would, on this theory, have immateriality and activity. Whatever the reason (another will be suggested shortly), it became a commonplace that the incorporeal was impassive. And, as the one incorporeal with which men were acquainted was the soul, it became evident that the

soul—or at least part of the soul (the intellect, in *De Anima* 408 b 18)—was impassive.

But for anything to be impassive was for it to have interesting properties. If anything was impassive, it was immutable. If immutable, it was immortal—or, as the theologians used to say, 'incorruptible'. One of the traditional arguments for the immortality of the soul thus arose¹².

Before going on let us see how it appears among the Greeks. The suspicion that matter could not start moving of its own accord is first voiced by Parmenides, according to Burnet (267), who believes that Parmenides's Being is matter. In Anaxagoras the suspicion grows, and, though *Nous* as a term may not be utterly free of materialistic connotations, yet it is surely freer of them than, say, earth, air, fire, and water. We need not take "too exalted a view of it", as Mr. Burnet fears we may, and yet sympathize with Aristotle's opinion (*Metaphysica* 984 b 16):

When one man said, then, that reason was present—as in animals, so throughout nature—as the cause of the world and all its order, he seemed like a sober man in contrast with the random talk of his predecessors. . . . Those who thought thus stated that there is a principle of things which is at the same time the cause of beauty, and that sort of cause from which things acquire movement.

The *Nous* of Anaxagoras is probably an attempt to discover as immaterial a source of movement as was at hand. Greek medicine in part, and Tertullian, for that matter, took similar views. The Pneumatists, for instance, referred movement to the *Pneuma*, or to what in Galen, if not before, became animal spirits. These were a kind of very subtle matter like a gas, produced by ebullition in the heart, which may be a development of the theories of Diogenes of Apollonia. His spirit is like the Stoics', "an eternal and undying body" (B. 355), but it is the least bodily of all things in a corporeal world¹³. As late as Buffon's description of the humming bird, the spirits were looked upon as the source of bodily movement.

Tertullian, who rails against the pagan philosophers' attempt to give a substance to God, sees no repugnancy between Christianity and materialism. Indeed he argues—from our very postulate—that the incorporeality of the soul is anti-Christian. For how could incorporeal things be either punished or rewarded? *Per quod enim puniuntur aut fovetur, hoc erit corpus* (*De Anima* 7.16). 'In so far as anything is corporeal', he says (*ibidem*, 22), 'it is passive; in so far as it is passive, it is corporeal'. The soul is a subtle and attenuated kind of spirit, but still not immaterial.

Even then in the materialists the source of movement was identified with what would seem least material to a naive mind.

We said above that another reason for making the active principle impassive would appear shortly. The reason is given in the Aristotelian formula, 'To act is nobler than to be acted upon'. If the agent is nobler than the patient and the soul is especially the agent,

it would never do to degrade it by soiling its power of pure activity. Although I am not insensitive to the dangers of over-simplification, I should be almost willing to say that the peculiar end of Greek ethics from Socrates to Plotinus was the articulation of this fundamental preference. The Greek ethicists seem to have had none of that reverence for submission, lowliness, and humility which Christian civilization has taught us to look upon as peculiarly edifying. Which of their authentic gods was a god of suffering? Whose function was it, whose essential function as a god was it to be humiliated, to atone? The passive side of life, in their sense of the word 'passive', was shameful.

The nobility of the impassively active is evidenced by Greek philosophers as early as Xenophanes. "One god, the greatest among gods and men, neither in form like unto mortals nor in thought He sees all over, thinks all over, and hears all over But without toil he swayeth all things by the thought of his mind" (B.119). So Empedocles's wise men are like gods, "free from human woes, safe from destiny, and incapable of hurt" (B.226). And Anaxagoras's *Nous*, "the thinnest of all things and the purest", has "all knowledge about everything and the greatest strength; and . . . has power over all things, both greater and smaller, that have life" (B.259-260).

According to Stobaeus, Democritus held similar views. 'To him the soul was the dwelling of a daemon and he believed the good to be tranquillity and well-being and harmony and symmetry and impassiveness (*ataraxia*). And he said that this came from the division and distinction of the pleasures which he maintained was of greatest value to men' (Mullach, *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, I.340, Frag. 1). 'For men', he went on, 'tranquillity is born of mild pleasures and the well-ordered life; and want and abundance both change and work violent movements in the soul' (*ibidem*, 341, Frag. 20). He even discouraged the having of children, seeing 'many and great dangers' in it and little happiness. But Democritus is far from his disciples the Epicureans. That god-like bliss and detachment which Lucretius pictures in the opening of the second book of *De Rerum Natura* is almost horrible in its impassivity: 'nothing is sweeter than to occupy the strongholds of the wise, serene regions whence one may look down upon other men and watch them straying hither and yon'. In fact the Sage of the Epicureans and the Sage of the Stoics are alike in their detachment from perturbation. Their souls may be both material and perishable, but the life of each is free from passion. Each not only shuns pleasure, but also keeps free from pain¹⁴.

The Greek valuation of action was perhaps one of the most beautiful of their contributions to modern thought. It made for freedom in conduct and independence in thinking. But it was the one contribution that was not to be absorbed in its integrity by European civilization. The dominant thought of the West accepted as its philosophy of life terrestrial pessimism,

¹²See Plato, *Phaedo* 80 B, C. Lucretius (3.634-641) argues from the materiality of the soul to its divisibility and thence to its mortality.

¹³Compare Lucretius 3.161-176.

¹⁴Compare Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, Part II, Chapter I, § 14.

man's rational and ethical impotence, receptivity instead of an active search for truth. 'To learn', said the last of the Greek philosophers (Plotinus, *Enneades* 6.1.20), 'is not to be struck as by a blow'. 'Instantly', said St. Augustine in the garden at Milan, 'by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away'.

The perfectly active and hence impassive being must be insured against any infringement upon its activity. It must be that which cannot be acted upon. The Greek philosopher found his insurance in a concept which I shall call the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty is the highest good; as one approaches sovereignty, one approaches the highest good.

The best description of the sovereign is the description of Eleatic Being in the poem of Parmenides (Burnet 74):

... it is complete, immovable, and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for now it *is*, all at once, a continuous one Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than in another Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself. And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side. Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing; while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything.

Eleatic Being is the absolutely immutable. It is immutable in all the respects which Aristotle catalogued as ways of change, in essence, quality, quantity, or place (*Metaphysica* 1069 b 8). It is all of a piece and can neither come into being nor depart from being. Since nothing changes of its own accord, but only from action received from without, the absolutely sovereign must be all that is. There must be no other gods before it. If there were, what would prevent an infringement of its sovereignty? Change, it will be noticed, cannot be spontaneous. It must always be preceded by the interaction of two things.

The earliest Greek philosophers apparently made their first causes sovereign. Anaximander's Infinite was "eternal and ageless", and "encompasses all the worlds" (B.52). Anaximenes's Air was "one and infinite", the source of the past and the future, "the gods and things divine"; it was to the universe as our souls are to our bodies (B.73). Xenophanes's God "abideth ever in the selfsame place, moving not at all; nor doth it befit him to go about now hither now thither" (B.120). Heraclitus's wisdom is "to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things" (B.134). His God is "day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger . . ." (B.136). His soul's measure is so deep that you will not find its boundaries by travelling in any direction (B.138). His Cosmos, "which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made; but it was ever, is now, and ever shall be an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out" (B.134). The air of Diogenes of Apollonia is "great, and mighty, and eternal, and undying, and of great knowledge"

(B.355). Anaxagoras's *Nous* is "infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself And *Nous* has power over all things, both greater and smaller, that have life" (B.259-260).

The fragments are not complete enough to do more than suggest why these early men identified the sovereign with the first cause. Sometimes, as in Parmenides, the reasoning is elaborate and satisfies the need that a purely causal and active being be alone in what Empedocles called "circular solitude" (B.210). But whether they reasoned that the first cause must be sovereign and so identified it with whatever seemed sovereign, or whether they had other means of identifying the first cause and then discovered its sovereignty, I do not know. I have given elsewhere¹⁶ a hint of why I suspect them to have looked for a sovereign something in the world, but that hint is so biased by prejudice that I cannot reasonably expect many people to accept it.

Whatever the reason, a strange thing happened to the concept. By Plato's time at least it had emerged from the depths of consciousness as a term not merely descriptive, but normative as well. By that time, if one attributed the Eleatic properties to anything, one was bestowing praise and not merely describing something. Plato's Ideas (at least in *Phaedo* 65, *Phaedrus* 247, and *Symposium* 211), Aristotle's Prime Mover, Epicurean Atoms, Stoic Reason, the Plotinian One, all were sovereign in this sense of the word. The eulogistic connotation appears in the ethical systems correlated with these systems of thought. The good man is the man whose life is as close an approximation as is humanly possible to the character of the sovereign. Plato's reason is a harmony, almost a Pythagorean *μετρησις*, of the various faculties of the soul. But his ideas were a harmony of the various particulars which they subsumed. There is a complete analogy between his Idea of the good, the just individual, and his just State. The good is sufficient (*Philebus* 20 D), and "the being which possesses good always, everywhere, and in all things, has the most perfect sufficiency and is never in need of anything else" (*ibidem*, 60 C). The idea of the good "is the highest knowledge, and . . . all other things become useful and advantageous only by their use of this" (*Republic* 6, 305 A). Just as the sun is the author of visibility in all visible things and of generation and nourishment and growth, "though himself not . . . a generation", "In like manner the good may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence . . ." (*ibidem*, 509 B). So in the *Lysis* (215 B) the good man is said to be self-sufficient and wanting nothing. And in the *Republic* (3, 387 D) he is "sufficient for himself and his own happiness, and therefore is least in need of other men". He will feel grief over neither death nor misfortune (*ibidem*). In the *Laws* (1, 644 B) the good man is he who is able to rule himself, the bad he who is not. Later (4, 716 D, E) the good man is said to be the man most like God. State justice is a balance between the three social orders; individual justice is a

¹⁶The Monist, April, 1921.

balance between the three faculties of the soul; the idea of the good is a balance between Beauty, Symmetry, and Truth (Philebus 65).

Aristotle's rational man is a reproduction of the Prime Mover. They both lead the theoretic life, a life spent in contemplation, so free from passivity that their lives are selfenclosed. Human perfection is defined in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.6) as 'a conscious exercise of the faculties in conformity with the law of virtue'. In Book 10 happiness is seen to be essentially an activity, and that activity is seen to be philosophic meditation controlled by its own standards. It is the highest, most permanent, most pleasurable, selfsufficient, independent state, and productive of leisure. Aristotle frankly patterns his ideal upon the life of the gods. But the Prime Mover is the highest of beings, permanent, selfsufficient, independent, living a life of absolute leisure. It is a life spent in thinking¹⁶. The Epicurean Sage is even more noticeably a copyist of the natural order, for, as everyone knows, the atoms of the Epicurean world swerved in their courses merely to introduce chance into the universe that a precedent might be established for personal and individual choice. Compare Lucretius 2.250-259:

Denique si semper motus conectitur omnis,
et vetere exoritur <semper> novus ordine certo,
nec declinando faciunt primordia motus
principium quoddam quod fati foedera rumpat,
ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur,
libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat,
unde est haec, inquam, fatis avolsa <potestas>
per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque voluntas,
declinamus item motus nec tempore certo
nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?

In Stoicism, and here we end this enumeration, there is the same duplication of the character of the universe. The order which is immutable and divine is reproduced point for point in human nature. The divine *pneuma* was paralleled in the human soul, both utterly simple and omnipresent in their respective bodies¹⁷. But, like many other people, they believed that it was possible to be false to one's real nature and that virtue was the recovery of man's essence. The virtuous life was a life in conformity with the dictates of reason and by its aid man emerged from the marshes of passion like new land rising from the sea. What would such a life be like? In the words of Zeller¹⁸, summarizing the Stoic writers, "The wise man is absolutely perfect, absolutely free from passion and want, absolutely happy; as the Stoics exclusively assert, he in no way falls short of the happiness of Zeus, since time, the only point in which he differs from Zeus, does not augment happiness at all". Like Cleanthes's Zeus, he would be 'almighty, everlasting, sovereign of nature, directing all in accordance with law'.

My argument may seem obscure at this point. To recapitulate, whatever ethicists posit with approval as the goal of life must have value in their eyes. Hence,

when they posit sovereignty as the goal, it may be thought to have value in their eyes. The four ethical systems mentioned urge that man duplicate as closely as possible in his life the life of the sovereign. Hence they must have valued sovereignty.

With the coming of Christianity sovereignty was no longer a possible human achievement. Man was in essence a dependent, not an autonomous being. The majesty and the nobility of Eleatic Being, however, was neither denied nor forgotten. They still commanded the highest respect, but were found not in human beings but in God. From God sovereignty passed to the Church, from the Church to the King, from the King to the State, from the State to the People. It has revealed itself in law, in science, in reason, in art, wherever men have looked for salvation or guidance. It possesses authority beyond all other things and compels mankind to do it reverence.

Yet there is no way of justifying its prerogatives by reason. Why should the eternal and unchanging and unified and impassive be any more worthy of our devotion than the temporal and mutable and multiple and inactive? Is there some strange law of psychology by which men turn to Elea as Mohammedans turn to Mecca? The Greeks may have felt a living hunger for stable authority, since it was the one thing which their crazily disjointed civilization lacked before the time of the Macedonian triumph. Yet looking back on those days from our greater order and regularity, we feel that we should gladly trade our political stability for their artistic and philosophic genius.

It is interesting perhaps to observe the appearance in philosophy of anti-eleaticism. People are beginning to assert that the universe is multiple, not one; that God is temporal and not eternal; that emotions and sensations are as noble as the reason. Some of these denials first gave voice years ago, but feebly and to small effect. It may be that our preoccupation with biology and psychology have had something to do with our new valuation of growth and change; the development of non-Euclidean geometries may have contributed to the decision that reason is as arbitrary as anything else; above all the growth of secular authority—the authority of political organizations which cannot justify their crimes by supernatural apologies—has had a share in making us intolerant of institutions which claim rights above those of their constituent members.

These are but a few of the presuppositions of Greek philosophers, the most general. What I have said is founded upon a good bit of conjecture. But how else is one to interpret texts which are as tantalizing as the beauty of broken sculpture? Nor must it be surmised that the Greeks were unanimous in their acceptance of these presuppositions. There were others than those mentioned who disagreed. But they either lacked a sacred bard or were neglected by subsequent tradition. It will be the work of another study to expound the heretics and for the moment they must be left in neglect,

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¹⁶Compare the attributes of God in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Mundo*, Chapters 6-7 (406 b 28).

¹⁷See Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Skeptics*, English translation³, Chapter IX, B, page 204.

¹⁸Zeller, *Stoics, etc.*, Chapter X, C, (1), page 268.